



**Ridgefield
Economic &
Community
Development
Commission**

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Glori Norwitt - Chair
Geoffrey Morris – Secretary
Sean Dowd
Kay Gelfman
Jennifer Gioffre
Brittany Howell
Bob Knight
Mark Riser
Jonathan Winn

Rudy Marconi, First Selectman

ridgefieldct.com

**Approved Minutes
March 6, 2023, at 6:30pm
in-person in Town Hall Lower Level Conference Room**

In attendance Secretary Geoffrey Morris, Commissioners Kay Gelfman, Sean Dowd, Mark Riser, Brittany Howell, and Jonathan Winn.

The meeting was called to order at 6:34pm. Next meeting is April 3, 2023.

Dowd motioned to approve February 2023 Minutes without changes; Riser seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

General Discussion

Public Comment

P&Z Commissioner Elizabeth DiSalvo brought information about an electric shuttle bus that she recommends is created to carry residents and visitors around town and between parking areas.

Recap of Recent Events (Morris)

We acknowledged that Patrick Sciaratta passed away recently. The ECDC sent flowers and a card to his visitation at Kane Funeral Home.

Town Assessor Al Garzi will attend our April meeting in person. Knight will be speaking with Al re topics/issues to cover.

The BOS has approved and sent Town “Info and Guidelines for Boards, Committees and Commissions” which has been distributed to all the ECDC Commissioners. Please review, and we will review at the April meeting.

From Unapproved Minutes from BOS Meeting on Feb 15:

“There is an ongoing FOI case against the ECDC for a meeting that was held without proper notice. The ECDC has recognized their mistake, rescinded the meeting, and held another meeting with a 24-hour advanced notice as required by the Freedom of Information Act. The complainants have denied the request to withdraw the case, despite the rectification. As a result, the Town continues to burn through their legal budget, which ultimately costs the tax payers more money.”

Cultural District Roundtable Webinar: Glori was a speaker in a 1.5-hour webinar with 50 attendees, organized by CT Main Street Center. There are currently 3 Cultural Districts in the state: Ridgefield, Torrington and New London. There are approximately 5 other towns in the process of an application.

Wednesday, March 15 at 12:15pm - Lunch meeting with Jessica Vonashek, Head of Econ Development for Norwalk. All Commissioners are invited!

On Tues 2/27, Geoffrey, Mark and Glori appeared before BOS to request additional funds for the ECDC Budget. In the Fiscal Year 2024 (starting this July) budget, the BOS is requesting an increase from \$15k to \$25k for the ECDC. It still needs to be approved by BOF, and then approved by Town vote.

Charter Revision Commission (Morris)

The ECDC has two recommended changes:

(1) for Charter Section 5-8 to be modified, to increase the ECDC from seven to nine members, and to increase the terms from one-year to two-years.

(2) for Section 19-64 of the Code, Part B: Land inventory power to be removed.

Motion to accept and send to Charter Revision Commission by Morris. Riser seconded. All in favor.

Broadband Feasibility Study (Knight, Morris)

Once we get a draft from EntryPoint, we want to schedule a Community Engagement meeting. This will likely be in late March. The study will look at the cost of two options: burying 80% of fiber in the ground and having 20% on poles and burying 20% in the ground and having 80% on poles.

Cultural District Award (Morris, Gelfman)

Morris suggested that we need an award to hand out to the four winners on May 11 during the Behind the Scenes ceremony. Morris moved that we allocated \$450 to purchase four acrylic awards. Winn seconded. The vote was 5-1 with Gelfman opposing the purchase. In addition, we discussed creating a permanent sculpture that would go near the CVS parking lot. With the input of Aldrich curator Richard Klein we are looking to create a granite acorn that we estimate would cost about \$10,000 and carry the names of the annual winners.

Downtown Beautification (Gelfman)

The group had a meeting with “CT Main Street Center” and discussed ideas for downtown. We will meet again on March 17. Focusing on alleys, got input from Downtown Ridgefield. The group has coalesced and ready to move forward. There are 13 alleys in the downtown area, mostly owned by private businesses/individuals.

Marketing in Deborah Ann’s Kiosk (Morris)

Update on Map. We have gotten a near-final version from designer Marge Heminway and look to either print it or have it produced on aluminum. There is a meeting with the BOS on March 15 to discuss the digital monitor for the kiosk. Gioffre, Winn, Gelfman, and Norwitt are preparing for the meeting.

Update on Planning & Zoning Commission topics (Gelfman)

Inclusionary zoning: affordable housing component. Position statement from ECDC, suggested by Gelfman who will take the lead in writing a statement.

Business cards available to ECDC commissioners.

March 16 State of the Town Address by First Selectman Marconi at 7:30 am at Lounsbury House, Breakfast Provided.

- Glori getting Volunteer of the Year award from the Chamber of Commerce.

Motion to adjourn at 7:40pm – motion by Morris, second by Gelfman, all in favor.